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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1312

January 10, 2005

Honorable Dennis Hastert
Speaker, U. S. House Of Representatives
Speakers Office - H232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515-0001

Dear Mr. Speaker:

As you know, the President made a visit last week to southwestern Illinois to address the issue of medical malpractice reform among other issues.

As you will recall, I sent you a letter on January 16, 2003 urging the leadership to include insurance accountability provisions in any legislation on medical malpractice reform brought before the House of Representatives.

Unfortunately, the industry that determines the premiums that hospitals and physician must pay was absent from the reform bill and the House Rules Committee refused to allow any amendments on the floor dealing with insurance accountability when the bill was debated and passed by the House.

President Bush referred to how well the system is working in California with caps on damages to victims. However, he did not mention that the insurance industry in California is required to appear before a public body to justify increases in rates for medical malpractice insurance.

I urge you to pattern any legislation coming to the House floor after the California system. Caps alone did not work in California. It was only when Proposition 103 went into affect making the insurance industry publicly accountable that malpractice rates came down.

I urge you to support insurance accountability in addition to caps.

I stand ready to work with you on this critical matter.

Sincerely,



Jerry F. Costello
Member of Congress
JFC/cf

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